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EPA Names 'Best Workplaces for Commuters'

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 23, 2006 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced its annual list of Best Workplaces for Commuters from the Fortune 500 companies.

This year, 133 companies employing more than 700,000 workers qualify for this list. The top 20 employers are ranked by the percentage of domestic employees who are eligible for commuter benefits, such as subsidized transit passes, telework, carpool programs, and emergency rides home.

Each year, says EPA, the congestion created from commuting to and from work causes 3.7 billion hours of lost productivity, costing employees 92 million work weeks, and the nation \$63.1 billion in wasted time and fuel. ?

Winners this year include Intel, Microsoft, Google Inc., Oracle, QUALCOMM, Yahoo!, Cisco Systems, Sun Microsystems, Texas Instruments, Applied Materials, Safeco Insurance, Reliant Energy, Wyeth, Apple, and IBM.

Among the winners was Nike, which offers a program called TRAC (Traveling Responsibly? Accept the Challenge.) Nike offers monthly prizes and incentives to employees at its World Headquarters and surrounding areas in the Portland, Ore. metropolitan area who can get to work by eliminating the use of a gasoline or diesel- powered vehicle.

TRAC is staffed by a full-time employee transportation coordinator who manages information about the program on the company intranet. The TRAC website offers tips and resources on alternative commuting -- everything from public transportation and biking routes, to how to set up a carpool complete with Nike employees or with others in the area. Employees register on the TRAC website each week for the number of alternative commutes they take the week prior. Prizes, which are done by monthly drawing, are given to an average of 40 employees. Other incentives include annual public transportation passes from TriMet for \$20 and a shuttle system that allows employees to take public transportation and have a ride to campus and from off-site locations to campus.

Since the program began in 1992, it has reduced the company's average drive-alone rate from 98% to 84%. In fiscal year 2006 ended May 31, 2006, based on an average round trip of 17.8 miles, Nike employees saved approximately 719,343 vehicle miles traveled by using alternative commute modes. That's a saving of 35,967 gallons of gas. Nike also saved 40,413 vehicle trips in FY'05.

Another winner, Sun, provides an array of benefits that help employees pursue environmentally friendly and cost-effective commuting strategies. Sun's commute programs have eliminated more than 3,000 tons of CO2 emissions and have saved employees hundreds of thousands of hours that otherwise would have been wasted in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Sun's flexible work program for its mobile and distributed workforce, called iWork, consists of leading-edge technologies and forward-thinking work practices that create an innovative, productive work environment where the network is the computer and employees can work anywhere, anytime using any device. The program offers flexible work choices that include the option to work from home or a local drop-in center which allows employees to spend less time and money on commuting. Sun employees also use SMART (Sun Microsystems Alternative Resources for Transportation) programs and services which give up- to-date commuter information, incentives for taking transit, biking and walking to work as well as shuttle rides to better utilize public transportation options near Sun campuses.

To qualify as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters, employers must provide:

- At least one primary commuter benefit, such as a monthly transit/vanpool pass subsidy or a significant telecommuting program;
- At least three supporting commuter benefits, such as carpool/vanpool incentives, lockers/showers for bikers or walkers, compressed/flexible work schedules, or on-site daycare;
- A central point of contact, who actively informs employees of available commuter benefits; and
- Access to a regional or employer-provided Emergency or Guaranteed Ride Home Program.

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